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LAWTON

1854



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THOUGHTS
ON
EDUCATION.

BY
ELIZA C. LAWTON.

—•••—
"Education is a training for future usefulness."
—•••—

LONDON:
THOMAS HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.
1854.



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LONDON:
G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

PREFACE.

So much has been written of late on the Education of Girls that some apology may be deemed necessary for entering on the subject anew. The taste of the day inclines many parents to seek what is showy and superficial in the education of their daughters, and a certain advancement in book learning and accomplishments is usually considered by them as its final result.

In opposition to these views, the Writer conceives education to be founded in that culture of the heart and disposition, that discipline of the mind and the affections, which form the character and prepare a woman to pursue her path in life

with honour to herself and advantage to those around her. This, indeed, as it concerns the future, is the most important part of the training of youth. Knowledge not erected on this basis is insecure against the trials of life; and education can only be truly called complete when acquirements matured by industry and taste are blended in the individual with what is modest, sensible, and lovely in their employment—with a character, in short, founded in moral excellence and the Christian virtues.

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Thoughts on Education.

EDUCATION may be termed, without fear of contradiction, the great social question of the day. The impulse of an anxious movement in this direction has been felt through every stage of society ; new institutions have been established, and the reform and amelioration of old ones proposed ; the defect of existing means for the right training and direction of youth has pressed alike on the attention of the philanthropist and the legislator as a subject of momentous responsibility, in the conviction, that whether Education be given or withheld, it still goes on by imitation and example, unfortunately with a fearful preponderance on the side of evil. It is, however, consoling to know that the subject, by being discussed, is becoming better understood, and that the advocates of a sound and practical system of

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teaching for the poorer classes, by the judicious questioning in which their lessons consist—by inculcating a knowledge of things and not words, and by demonstrating the advantage of habits of morality, industry, and economy, rather than enforcing them by bare precept—are effecting a good which will be felt in the course of a few years as little less probably than a social regeneration.

It is not the object of the writer of these pages to enter at length on the subject of general Education, or to offer any opinion upon the late well-meant benevolent attempt to afford the destitute *cast away* little children of a metropolis like London, some degree of book-learning as a remedy for the enormous inequality of their social position. In considerations of this sort the eye naturally embraces the whole circumference of humanity, to examine what is right and what wrong ; and to draw inferences from the circumstances of others which may favourably influence our own.

The extremes of society, the upper and the lower classes have each to encounter the peculiar difficulties and besetting snares of their relative position, and herein, at least, may be said to “meet.” To one brought up in the lap of luxury

and indulgence, how hard appears the first lesson of self denial—the sacrifice of some darling object to high and conscientious principle. In the opposite extreme of society how difficult to learn not to repine—not to envy or wish evil to our neighbour ; yet in either case the neglect of such principles of conduct must leave great evils to germinate and bear their fruit in the life.

Experience proves that those whom Providence has equally removed from the cruel trials of necessity and the temptation of riches, are in this happy “golden mean” of their condition most favourably disposed for the work of the teacher, and that to develop the full energy of their being, their moral as well as mental faculties, is not so difficult a task. A well defined object—the advancement of their position—stimulates their faculties, and encourages their industry ; in the pleasure of acquirement and the pursuit of various knowledge they forget vulgar passions and interests, and a moral tone is even diffused insensibly in the calm and regular exercise of the intellectual powers. In such a sphere of youthful life we read the best commentary on the happiness resulting from the habit of industry, and its concomitant sense of improvement, and were this effect merely transient

it would not be to be despised. Among others, removed by position from the pressure and sting of necessity, the same habit of industry must be acquired from higher motives than merely personal ones ; indeed as we carry our thoughts through every successive stage of the human family, we perceive unity in the design of Education, and however variously modified in its application to circumstances, one main object : the preparation of the pupil both in his private and social capacity for a life of usefulness and of virtuous enjoyment. Such is Education in the abstract idea, and of little value will be the lessons gained from books, or the daily training in order and regularity which accompanies them, if they do not bear out this practical application and ripen into a permanent influence on the character and conduct.

Where this theory of Education is least happily carried out is probably in schools for young ladies of the upper class of society. Speaking of these institutions "by their fruits," it is no intemperate or harsh judgment to say that the superficial prevails in them over the solid ; and that even in the pursuit of accomplishments the motives which should animate, and the taste which should direct, are often wanting.

The great mistake in this system is the substitution of *instruction* for *education*. The true basis of Education is moral culture and mental training, with a view to the practical business of life. To form women, not as the object of fugitive and idle admiration, but for the high position of companions to men of eminence and attainment—as guides and examples to the young: to impart to the tender girl the courage, firmness, devotion, and self-denial, which are so essential to fit her for her path through this life of every varying circumstance—these are the primary and fundamental objects of Education, and they produce a character which easily receives and adds a lustre to every elegant acquisition and graceful accomplishment. Let the beauty of taste or style which she exhibits in any branch of the arts, be a part of herself, a reflection of her own character, and we shall give to it a homage which we can never pay to the external and superficial.

The too general omission of those principles of Education which influence the moral being, which lead to habits of thought and reflection, and induce that conscientious sense of responsibility which is the foundation of the virtuous character, may alone answer the frequent question, “Why

are there so few good schools?" And yet the after-vocation of woman herself is to be an *educator*. This is her destiny; and the more her sphere of duties is domestic, the more an enlarged cultivation of the mind in youth must prepare and adapt her for it. Yet whatever in mature life may be her situation of responsibility towards others, she can impart only what she has herself received.

How frequently it happens that girls are kept at home until within a few months of their introduction into the busy field of life, excluded from its duties, and ignorant of its obligations. Under the guidance of one who is herself totally unfit for so responsible a task, a "Finishing School" is selected for her, at which she, in the course of twelve months, is expected to complete what, in truth, has never been begun, and whence she seldom returns with aught save vanities and frivolities.

This state of things, in connexion with numerous other instances in which it might be shown how often the guardians of the young imperfectly adapt means to ends, is calculated not only to awaken lively regrets in all who, as directors of Education, have a conscientious interest in the

subject, but it more intimately concerns those whose existence may hereafter be passed in the society of the thus educated. What attainment in languages or accomplishments, superficial or otherwise, can supply the place of moral and intellectual training overlooked? It is from among the educated in the higher classes that our clergy, our legislators, our statesmen, our country gentlemen must seek faithful companions for their hours of leisure, and to share their domestic affections. And yet the training which should qualify woman to fulfil her duty in so important a sphere, which should invite to deeds of mercy and self-denial, prompt to alleviate the afflictions and enhance the joys of the partner of her life, and teach her to find in this allotted path of domestic peace and love, her truest satisfaction and her highest glory, the preparation for this is wholly wanting.*

* Bishop Taylor's definition of friendship is worth remembering for its condensation of moral sentiment. In the following passage he is addressing a lady: "By friendship, I suppose you mean, the greatest love and the greatest usefulness; and the most open communication, and the noblest sufferings; and the most exemplary faithfulness, and the severest truth; and the heartiest counsels, and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable."

Such an Education demands time as well as fidelity, experience and tact in the carrying of it out. The principles which regulate good conduct and control the impulses of temper are best instilled through the silent force of example. Habitual cheerfulness and equanimity have too harmonious an influence in society to require a recommendation in words when we can contemplate them in a living example. Hence, whoever attempts to guide the young, must possess the disciplined mind which ensures constant respect, under all circumstances. Even under those most trying to human infirmity the model and example must not be forgotten. The Educator must for the time take the mother's place, for affection and confidence are the springs of school discipline, and the sole principles on which girls can be well trained. And while accomplishments may be imparted by masters appointed for the purpose, it is from the temporary parent alone that holiness, self-control, forbearance, love of truth, integrity, and all the virtues of the heart, which are the result of moral with intellectual training can be looked for.

An education thus conducted, which can alone exalt our women, imposes a responsibility not to

be lightly fulfilled on her who undertakes to superintend it. A life of preparation, a natural aptitude for an engagement undertaken on the most serious and solemn convictions, among which no selfish or sordid motives find place, must qualify for the important task of education. The affections, by means of which girls are so easily led, are not less exercised in her who leads them. So unworldly is the spirit of real teaching as to render it credible that no great good was ever accomplished in it, but by an abstract enthusiasm, and a devotion to the subject inspired by the magnitude of its object.

Were the duties of the educator bounded by the hour of lessons and the inspection of progress in various studies, they would be easy, simple, and mechanical—but in developing the character of the young, and imparting to it a bias to good, observation must extend to the most unreserved hours and the most unpremeditated acts of children, for herein is the true and faithful mirror of their nature. This vigilance exercised in a spirit of due benevolence and allowance for faults which may have had their origin in the nursery, must accompany in the directress a character open and free from suspicion. To meet the daily occur-

rences of life within the little world of a school in a manner to profit all concerned in them ; to see and sometimes to overlook ; to know how and when to correct whatever tends to wrong ; require such incessant attention and prompt intellectual activity, that few are equal to the arduous requirements of such an occupation. And yet when the mutual relations of kindness and confidence which must subsist between the teacher and the taught are well established, children are found to live under a sense of the constant inspection of their words and actions without restraint or embarrassment. They too, in their turn are observers, and are able to draw just conclusions from the uniform conduct of those who guide them, and to infer from it their well-founded and benevolent motives. Gradually appreciating these qualities they learn to respect them ; and the seeds of many a lasting friendship, bearing grateful attachment in after life, are often scattered in a sentence or word of advice uttered almost unconsciously by her who spoke it.

But a more important part of Education, as it concerns moral development, is that which cannot well be reduced to language or expressed in precept. This should be one of the silent effects of

habit in the daily intercourse of life, and of the example of a well ordered mind, whose possessor is truly in thought and in act what she appears. The power and the disposition to sympathise to a certain extent in the lively impulses of the young, encouraging in them the cheerfulness and the innocent freedom which have so favourable an influence on their health and being—are better adapted to gain their confidence, and to ground in them sincerity and openness of character than a system of habitual restraint and severity. Nature thus repressed, would be apt to take more licence than might be desired on unobserved occasions, and for such occasions reserve itself. But the educator, who is herself a companion in any well-timed subject of pleasantry and amusement, and a contributor to it, observant still of the nice boundaries of taste and propriety, gains this advantage, that the young learn to impose upon themselves a similar restraint. By giving free play to the natural disposition, in what is harmless, there is less risk of having the confidence abused than in pursuing an opposite course. The hours of relaxation passed in society and conversation are not the least important in the formation of character ; and to render them pleasant and profitable,

healthful equally to the mind and to the heart, requires a nice blending of the qualities of the companion and the guide in her who presides over them. The discussion of subjects of art or taste or even of lighter and livelier topics has a great charm for girls, and often serves to draw out in them varied talents. Here thinking for themselves, and in the unpremeditated impulse of discourse, they may be often more instructively, because more naturally, employed than in writing themes or essays. The differences of opinion sometimes elicited by general conversation, and the varied lights and aspects in which two people may see the same thing, teach at once that forbearance and charity in our relation to our neighbour, which are the basis of true politeness. If we would not have our sensitive feelings hurt in conversation, we must learn to tolerate and make allowance for the prejudices of others ; but even without respect to self, a kindly and benevolent disposition alone will always prompt to avoid the infliction of pain under any of its numerous and subtle forms. Least of all to be cherished among the ornaments of the female mind is any propensity to repartee or sarcasm. Even in men these should be but defensive weapons, for they al-

ways make the possessor rather feared than loved.

To the Christian rule of charity, acted on in relation to our neighbour in that large sense in which the Bible will have the term understood, must be superadded, for personal friendship and esteem, a disposition the most truthful, the most confiding and unreserved. Where these principles of intercommunion are thoroughly established between the directress and her charge, there is the fairest groundwork for education. A frank and open disposition is to be cultivated principally by example ; and when the tone of conversation is thus based in any little society, it will be sure to have an active influence on the lives and habits of its members.

Next to sincerity, remember still
Thou must resolve upon integrity.
God will have all thou hast, thy mind, thy will,
Thy thoughts, thy words, thy works.

There is nothing which writes its effects more legibly in the countenance, the air and manner, the speaking tones of the young, than the constant presence of this conscience void of offence—

this candid mind to whose possessor the arts of duplicity and subterfuge are alien and unknown.

It is the inward thus moulding the outward which gives to the countenance beauty of expression, and to the demeanour and manners harmony and repose. Affectation, that foible of the young who have been ill-trained, over-praised, and removed from proper standards of comparison in judging of themselves, can have no part in such a character.

But it is not merely to the personal happiness or the calm of conscience that the consideration of what is good and right, implied in moral training, is found beneficial ; it extends from the individual through all the relations of life. Our manners, our dress, our expense must submit to this standard of conduct, which teaches that every action is to be considered in reference to others as well as ourselves, and that in no circumstances can we be thought entirely independent or irresponsible.

A school not too numerous to obtain for each individual pupil the vigilant attention and personal superintendence of its directress, modelled in its domestic arrangements and in the intercourse of its inmates on the idea of a well ordered private family, forms a little community in which the

highest objects of education may be best accomplished. The variety of talents, disposition, and character exemplified in one small society, creates not only interest, amusement, and observation in the young themselves, but, under skilful management, may be made a perpetual source of silent instruction. The combinations of circumstances which elicit thought and improvement are constant in the daily intercourse of a school. These results of various minds, temperaments, and opinions not only serve to enliven the passing hour, but may be judiciously turned to the general advantage. It is not only in energy and emulation in the studies that the discipline of school education surpasses that of home, it is in the contrast of character and the influence for good resulting from it; the industrious, the persevering, the truthful and docile being in themselves living evidence of the happy effect of their good principles and dispositions.

But a great deal is lost in the education of the young, if the influence of habits of regularity and industrious application to lessons be not made to bear upon their moral training. Indeed it is to the pleasure they receive in the appointed fulfilment of those various duties and employments

which seem to picture in one day the idea of a calm and contented life :—in the tranquillity of the heart and conscience thus derived it is that the mind is opened to receive virtuous impressions. On the foundation of industry and acquirement other knowledge may be erected :—the important knowledge of *self* ; the necessity to value the real and despise the superficial ; to make truth the rule of life, and high motives and principles the basis of the actions.

A character founded in moral worth, with the ornaments of elegant acquirement superadded, presents a combination of all that is valuable and delightful in woman, among whose rarest adornments must certainly not be forgotten that of the apostle, “ a meek and quiet spirit.” The motives which lead to the acquirement of superior skill in languages or literature, in music or drawing, will certainly lead far from the legitimate object of those elegant studies, if they are founded in vanity or the love of distinction. A moral significance is interwoven in the purposes of our life, attends the objects of our pursuits, and guides us to their due appreciation.

The school period of a girl’s existence, serious as its objects are in reference to the future, is

generally happy ; and many a pupil in after years cherishes the memory of these days with peculiar fondness. Every intelligent and well disposed mind quickly comprehends the advantage and privilege of acquirement. The agreeable abstractions of study, the diversity of each day's duties, and even the mere order and regularity of occupation would alone dispose for happiness—but the pleasure of improving and of advancing in the social scale for the good of ourselves and others can hardly be estimated too highly. A sense of improvement in the ripening and maturing of experience and observation is even the consolation of old age ; and progress in one shape or another seems to be the law of our being. One of our later poets has a beautiful illustration of the comparative pleasure in intellectual acquirement exhibited by the cultivated and intelligent, and the neglected and ignorant. “The water-lily in the midst of waters lifts up its broad leaves, and expands its petals at the first pattering of the shower, and rejoices in the rain with a quicker sympathy than the parched shrub in the sandy desert.” There can be no doubt but that when the spirit and genius of studies and accomplishments are presented to the pupil, and not merely

their mechanical and matter-of-fact details, that lessons will be received with pleasure, and that this pleasure will increase in a degree commensurate with the success achieved in any particular department. All cannot be taught everything alike, nor after the same manner; the favourable disposition for certain branches of acquirement must be consulted in education; and yet the mind which is applied with energy and industry throughout the general course of studies, will chiefly excel in that particular one which the natural genius favours. The domain of science and the arts is, in many respects, a common territory; every possession well obtained facilitates new acquisitions. The light thrown by one acquirement on another affords a real gratification to the student. In languages, for which the female mind and ear seem to possess peculiar aptitude, we seldom find proficiency more rapidly and solidly advanced than when two or three different ones are cultivated at the same time.

Arithmetic generally appears in the character of the driest and most repugnant of studies, on account of the steady mental effort which any exercise in it involves. But what a medicine is here to correct and fix the wandering and volatile

mind, and to prepare and discipline it for other things, in which a tenacious memory is of the first importance. Were this science not the basis of the ordinary economical duties of life, regulating expenses and payments, consequently one to which no sensible person would on account of any grandeur of condition claim a superiority (for even the Emperor Charlemagne, it is said, kept an account of the eggs laid at his farms), we should still reverence it for the symmetry and proportion inherent in its laws, which extend to the fine arts themselves, and particularly to poetry and music. To every young mind, arithmetic may be applied as some test of its solidity and capacity. But the few rules in the different processes of arithmetic which are taught to young ladies—sufficient perhaps for practical purposes—are, after all, like the pebbles on the sea shore in comparison of the boundless and unexplored ocean which lies beyond. When we reflect that the science of numbers tends to the infinite, and that calculation in the higher form of the mathematics has mainly aided the astronomer, the navigator, and the philosopher, to ascertain and determine the laws by which the material universe is governed, we

may well approach even its elements with considerations of wonder and awe.

But there is a lighter and more pleasant aspect of figures. The problems of arithmetic often exhibited in tables of its first rules are so neat and ingenious, that they afford pleasure to every mind capable of appreciating an inductive truth. The great and imaginative composer Mozart was when a boy greatly fascinated by exercises in arithmetic, which formed for a time one of his favorite recreations. Aided by tables and computations the seaman makes his way securely through the trackless ocean; and the astronomer is able to read the heavens, more scientifically and with scarcely less pleasure than the poet:—

“ To behold the wand’ring moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray,
Through the heav’ns wide pathless way.’

Were it only as a healthful exercise and discipline of the mental faculties, the study of arithmetic would be valuable.

Geography has a charm for the imagination which renders every step in the pursuit of its science fascinating. It is not merely the “tower’d

cities," or the seas, rivers, and mountains, which it presents to us that please, enabling us to perform voyages by the fire-side ; but we possess in this knowledge the perpetual illustration of history, of travel, of manners, of religion ; and our humanity is enlarged by it when we recognise man in every clime as a member of the universal family. It would be a subject too wide to enter on the mental pleasures which open at this source. As in foreign travel the succession of new scenes is interesting, so also in the quiet study of geography. Nor does any intellectual pursuit more naturally lead the mind to considerations of religion than this in its accessories ; for take that single one of climates, and in viewing every tract of human habitation from the torrid zone to the poles, we cannot observe in each the exquisite adaptation of its natural productions to the means of man's existence without wonder and adoration.

But the practical charm of geography allies itself rather to the unknown than to the known. America was a dream of the imagination of Columbus, before he realized it ; and even now the finger will be found more frequently on the map of Africa, with its mysterious rivers un-

traced to any source, its gigantic solitudes, and wildernesses, unknown to European adventure, than pursuing the more familiar track of civilization. From ancient times Africa has been the land of mystery, and an old Roman poet describes it in his peculiar language as "the arid nurse of lions." Notwithstanding its burning atmosphere, and a climate peculiarly dangerous to European life, the pleasure of discovery and the keen appetite for adventure still attract to it numerous explorers.

As the scientific traveller now goes armed with various knowledge, to render his researches in the highest degree profitable to mankind, so must the student in her quiet chair make one intellectual acquirement bear upon and elucidate another. The "use of the globes," too, as it is termed, were it only to show the cause of the seasons, and of "the sweet return of morning and evening," would elevate the mind in the contemplation of the celestial mechanism. In this study we are upon the threshold of the most sublime considerations. The laws which hold the universe in its order and regularity, are, indeed, rather for learned geometricians, than to be thoroughly comprehended by non-mathematical amateurs: yet it is

possible to gain such a general idea of the philosophy of creation, and of the enormous aggregate of knowledge collected in the fixed sciences, as shall enable us to reverence the master names in that faculty, and to think of a Kepler, a Newton, a Galileo, with due honour. As we quit the wondrous revelations of the telescope, and the incomprehensible grandeur of space to consider the works of the Creator, in the opposite scale of minuteness, descending through the various grades of animal and vegetable life, we are obliged to confess that great and small are relative terms, which exemplify with equal force the attributes of inscrutable wisdom and divine power.

The study of languages is always pursued with the happiest results when accompanied by a taste for reading and literature. The foreign modern languages of Europe should be acquired in the purity of their idiom and accent, through a regular daily habit of conversation with native teachers. In speaking, fine organs are exercised, a quick ear, and a distinct articulation, accompanied by a power of rapid imitation, and whoever would have the thorough mastery of a language, must be able to write it as well as speak, read, and translate it. The tasteful reader desires to be in contact with books which

form a part of her world, enlarge her sympathies, and discipline her humanity. The chain of associations with them from the first study of letters in the nursery should be one of unbroken affection. The aim of the judicious teacher is to render every step in intellectual acquirement alluring and pleasant, an encouragement to the pupil, and an incitement to renewed activity. But after all our excursions in the language and literature of foreign countries, there is nothing which we shall return to with greater constancy of pleasure than to "the well of English undefiled," which subsists in the writings of our best authors. With regard to languages, Milton has said, "Though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied *the solid things in them as well as the words* and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only."

The study of history, as it forms a part of the present school exercise of girls, is greatly deficient in solidity. Omitting the spirit of the thing itself—the qualities in it which seize upon the heart and imagination, and incite the reader to think

and reflect, it occupies the memory by means of rhyming chronologies with a series of dates and facts, so lifeless and barren of import, that nothing less than a mechanical stratagem could have fixed them in the mind. Concerning the chronology of history, we may be well content with some idea approximating to the truth ; and possessing knowledge enough of the subject for the general purposes and requirements of conversation, may leave the complete and strict accuracy in dates and facts to be preserved in books, which will faithfully render them on due examination. Even a learned professor of this science does not carry about with him all the accumulations of his reading, but only so much as may be necessary for ready "*change*," and for current purposes in his commerce with the world. It is a great point of useful reading to know what should be digested and assimilated by the student, and what turned over to the safe keeping of books. The young lady's course of history, over and above her poetical chronologies, puts her in possession of an accurate list of the sovereign princes of England, possibly, also, of those of France, with the names and order of the Roman Emperors, by an effort of technical memory, free from all which can interest the heart

or the affections, and consequently of but little permanent value. Now if the knowledge of history is to be of practical benefit, it should show the bearing of ancient times upon our own ; the differences in government which influence the well-being of nations, and which among them is foremost in the advancement of its institutions, and in the scale of civilization. The epochs in the government of our own country which mark the progress of rational and constitutional liberty, abound with examples of virtuous patriotism and noble self sacrifice. Such instances as these, illustrated by good remarks or commentaries in the reading, must always fix the attention, and warm the sensibility of the young and ingenuous ; for in the assertion of a principle which concerns the general good, there is always something ennobling to contemplate in proportion to the danger and risk which attend it. In the general reading of history, the mind is too much allured by externals—by costume and trappings. The history of states in all times, affords but too many examples of that cunning and craft in ambitious men which lead them to seek their own welfare and interest in opposition to all the principles of truth and justice that should engage them to their fellow-

beings. The occasional triumph of wickedness, and failure of virtue, will not discourage those who do not look on this world as a scene of final retribution; but the reflecting reader will draw from the darkest pages of history a healthful moral—something to fortify and animate the mind, strong in the conscious rectitude of its principles and aspirations.

Over the vast field of human experience comprised in historical reading, the time devoted to female education, of which a great part is taken up by elegant accomplishments, and exercise for the preservation of health, will not permit the most industrious to travel. A general conception, an outline of history, may be formed to be amplified or filled up at future opportunities. The taste for solid and serious reading, when once it is acquired, ripens and matures with the powers of the understanding; and to minds happily constituted, books afford a consolation and a resource which increase in value and interest throughout the whole term of life.

But with the world of the present day before us, with its wonderful discoveries in science, realizing the vaunt of Puck, to “put a girdle round the earth in thirty minutes,”—with the genius of

the time all turned in the direction of the practical and the useful, it will appear romantic to give too much attention to abstract considerations of past events. It is desirable that education should always be moulded by the spirit of the age ; and it would be greatly to mistake the path of useful knowledge, not to lead the minds of the young to the consideration of so much of the truth of physical science as lies within their scope. Neither women nor men are all fitted to become philosophers ; but nearly every one may form an idea of philosophy, understand its objects, and venerate them. The sympathy with what is great, though unknown, will enlarge the mind and will save us from committing ourselves to the narrow and contemptuous opinions of ignorance and indifference. The powers of the human intellect to penetrate into sciences which require the most difficult and abstruse calculations, are independent of sex ; and the present age has acknowledged with universal applause the appearance of a female astronomer. In the fixed sciences the general reader can make no progress from the want of knowing the first terms ; yet this does not lessen his reverence of the powers, which, after mastering the accumulated knowledge of ages are projected into fresh

discovery. The hill of science is toiled up step by step, and Buffon has said, "Genius is patience." Nor are we to imagine that the youth who, in making his first excursions in Euclid, is so unfortunate as to fall at the bridge of asses, retains ever after a mean opinion of mathematical studies; on the contrary, he returns with the chivalrous feeling of a knight of old, convinced that the honour of this conquest was not reserved for him, and straightway seeks distinction in some new and more congenial path. If there be in a pupil a strong and peculiar determination to excellence in any branch of study, the educator should give it every advantage in the development; yet to meet genius will always be a rare accident, and we may consider the want of it not ill-compensated by the possession of good general powers. Of that outline of scientific knowledge which is now opened to every comprehension, it must be the disgrace of an educated person to be ignorant. "For thousands of years," observes an able writer on education, "men have continued to grow up in ignorance of many of the most useful qualities and applications of the substances by which they are surrounded—of the shape of the earth—of the distances, sizes, and movements of the heavenly

bodies—of chemical, electrical and mechanical forces—of the vital functions, and of the laws of their own intellectual and moral development.”

The doors and entrances of science are now set open, and all who have the courage may explore ; but the view obtained will not be entirely unuseful or uninstructional to those who stop at the threshold. Attention to those circumstances of daily domestic life which may have a future influence on our own well-being, or of those connected with us will not be disdained as a small part of the practical philosophy of education. The influence of air, of dress, or diet on a state of health or disease is highly important to be known by every one on whom the care of bringing up a family may hereafter devolve. The mistakes of servants and nurses entrusted with the management of infants, from which the most injurious consequences have resulted, require to be corrected by superior intelligence, and some acquaintance with cause and effect in physiology.

Looking forward to domestic duties as the object of life—the virtues may be continually exercised and purified by contemplating those duties as the source of innocent and simple pleasures. As children in handling their dolls gain a readi-

ness and skill which in mature years they turn to practical account, so their elder sisters prepare themselves for the future in forming their own ideas and notions of the perfect social fire-side, or the companionable walk or drive, while images of peace, cheerfulness, and innocence still haunt their day-dreams. In the well ordered school, as we see the female pupils passing from room to room in the quiet pursuit of their avocations, we seem to enter the poet's garden :

“ Calmest thoughts come round us—as of leaves
Budding,—fruit ripening in stillness,—autumn suns
Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves.”

Employment properly understood is a privilege ; and the repose and satisfaction of mind which arise from the sense of duties punctually fulfilled are alone sufficient to recommend habits of industry. Not only do we advance ourselves by our application, but we have the great pleasure of pleasing others ; and the teacher of any branch of study, who neglects the when and the where to bestow sincere and judicious commendation, omits to use one of the most powerful incentives to progress. In encouraging a taste for occupation, we preserve the docile pupil in that free and happy

disposition of mind which not only influences her health and well-being, but is most favourable to success in every liberal pursuit. Yet pleasure in lessons must not be found inconsistent with labour, and the intermission of hours of even severe attention, since nothing excellent or valuable can be or ought to be lightly gained. If we look to the ultimate objects of education with good principles and a proper sense of duty to parents and teachers, we shall rarely feel discontented in performing this part of the necessary journey of life.

Not to speak of the minority of the froward and indolent in schools—often reclaimed with difficulty from habits induced by early neglect and indulgence, but who afford a constant practical commentary on the effects of their own temper and feelings—it is sufficient for the estimate of diligence to picture in the mind for a moment its enforced opposite. Can anything be imagined more miserable, or, exempt from physical suffering, more intolerable, than a state of vacancy and inaction prolonged for some days. In such an useless and *do nothing* state, the very light of heaven would soon become distasteful. The imagination of this contrary condition to that of employment and action is alone sufficient to prove

that the law of universal labour imposed upon man is founded in wisdom and benevolence. It is impossible to conceive any work directed towards a good object which has not consolation and reward for the workman in his progress. We are even told by a great authority to adopt the mode of life which is most eligible, and that custom will render it the most agreeable.

The method of study pursued in reference to accomplishments in schools, however generally susceptible of improvement, is most particularly so in music, from a want of the direction and cultivation of the taste, and a consequent ignorance of the true standards of excellence in the art. It cannot of necessity be otherwise while young ladies are taught to receive ephemeral novelties as music, and to form their notions of the art on things soon thrown aside and out of fashion, like the bonnets and shawls of a past season. It is thought a great achievement if one pupil out of twenty is able to perform some *new* grand fantasia on a favourite opera air in a manner fit for the purposes of display; and yet, remote as all this is from the true objects of music, how many—taking the usual average of schools—return home in comparison of this one knowing nothing, and

able to do nothing more than inflict the usual penance on kind hearers and friends, and to confirm in opinion the expression, "a school-girl performance" as a bye word for all that is blundering, tasteless, and ridiculous? If children are led to have a false idea of music from the trivial things given them to practise, or if they hear daily a great deal that is worthless, sung or played out of tune by their practising companions, or are inured to the tones of old and worn out pianos, their non-success in music cannot be wondered at and hardly blamed. The taste is formed rather by listening than by practising, and therefore a good performer, good music, and a good pianoforte, should often be at command to illustrate and realize what is really beautiful. The opportunity of improving by occasional examples of excellence, both in the vocal and instrumental departments of music, should be enjoyed by all who would cultivate it with serious purpose, in which the most finished execution and the highest mechanical skill are ever esteemed only as means of variety, and secondary to the pure intellectual acquirement. Where taste is wanting mechanism is often confounded with music itself.

But it is not merely that the voice of true

music is rarely heard in schools by way of model and illustration—the opening instincts of natural taste which require to be developed with, at least as much care as the powers of the hand, and should be as sedulously watched in the lessons, are almost entirely neglected. A conscientious and experienced master may soon discover what foundation in nature he has to build upon, and with what degree of sensibility to measured sounds his pupil is endowed, by making trial of a single little composition of standard elegance. The manner of its reception, its effects, teach him what he has to do and what he may expect.

Such a mode of teaching presupposes a system in which the hand, the ear, the eye are each carefully trained for performance—with expression and refinement of style in the delivery of true music as its ultimate object. To affect the sensibility of hearers with real emotion, is in music so noble a part in comparison with that which excites admiration by dexterity of hand, that no one would hesitate to choose between them. But the two qualities should be combined. If execution be neglected, music languishes from the want of variety and contrast; if expression, then the ear is tormented by the unmeaning rattle of sense-

less sounds. When a young person is constituted for eminence in any department of music, it is of great importance that no time should be lost in giving to the natural ability its most favourable direction and the fullest development. To excite in the young pianoforte-player a patient and contented disposition in going daily through those dry and unpalatable tasks, which in the end bear the fruits of excellence, is a great object of the judicious master, who will know also how and when to support and encourage his industrious pupil, as well as to interpose for her fitting recreations. But to turn the hours of practice, as too many young people wish to do, into idle amusement for the ear, gratifying it with tunes and trifles, injures the most hopeful talent and permits nothing excellent to be brought to maturity. The young player is at frequent periods to measure her strength and degree of proficiency, but with thoughts continually bent on what is more excellent than herself—to listen and wait her turn and time, without being in too great haste to anticipate the reward of her application and diligence.

How little do they comprehend the scope of music who use it only to fix the wandering eyes

in a drawing-room, to exact admiration real or feigned, or consider it merely as the fugitive attraction of girlhood which must give way on settlement in life to other and more serious concerns! Whatever in the world is most remote from a vain or selfish enjoyment is certainly music;—no vain person ever attained great success in it. Implanted by the Divine hand as the perpetual solace of mankind, it is in favoured individuals a pleasure ever increasing with years and experience, and surviving even the natural decay of the bodily powers. Many a musician advancing in life is able to attest this truth with mingled feelings of wonder and gratitude, and the young performer who forms her idea of the art on such examples of its influence will see that she holds her acquirements as much for the benefit of others as for herself. The beautiful *adagio* movements of the sonatas and symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven, and the solemn fugues of Bach, speak no intelligible language if they do not, through the ear, suggest to the thoughtful mind this reflection.

Nothing is better fitted to flourish in a community than music, where those who are most happily organized for it draw out the excellence of the rest by secret sympathy like the harmonics

of a string or organ-pipe. Society and companionship in this pursuit are most favourable to success, and yet no advantage is made of them; while the utility of turning acquirement in one department of music to good purpose in another is almost totally overlooked. All who can play, who understand the division and counting of the time in music, or who have in the elementary part of thorough bass been led to consider the nature of the intervals in chords and their just intonation, are in a degree advanced to make harmony with their voices, and no assembly of a dozen members need be without the means of such social studies in part singing as shall at once delight and improve. The division of female voices into first and second soprano and alto affords rich effects of combination, and where choral exercises are judiciously directed they sow the seeds of a fine taste. The old ecclesiastical music of Italy is excellent for this purpose; no house in which it is well rendered need want the solemn tones of an organ. And these practices of combination, which ought to be made a feature in the musical pursuits of every school, have as good an effect on the pupils individually as collectively. The best solo singers are those who

have been trained in harmonious society; for however indispensable separate exercise may be to form tone and acquire execution, the feeling which gives to tone its beauty and teaches where to swell and diminish sounds is acquired by knowing one part of a composition in its relation to the rest. The excellent musician in playing or singing with others must not only know his own part, but how all those should sound which sound with him.

It has ere now created some vexation to see the volumes filled with notes and figures, entitled "Exercises in Thorough Bass," which young ladies carry home from school with them;—not merely, because, being written instead of made out *extempore* from the book, these exercises are soon forgotten, but because the whole subject wants a sensible and practical application, and is consequently useless. But though the figures of thorough bass are no longer attached to modern music, the study has still a life and a practical value in the estimation of the musician. Its application should however be understood. This short-hand of harmony is a rapid medium of communicating the knowledge of sounds moving together, and as a practical art may be ranged

in the divisions following: the playing readily from figures; the figuring of chords written; the knowledge (by ear) of the figures of chords played; the ability to intone any given interval of a chord; the knowing how to accompany full harmonies with the left hand. If we are to accompany a recitative, if we would understand what we hear performed, if we would not be embarrassed in singing a part at sight, or be at a loss to throw in a good effect of our own in accompanying singing, we shall find this department of knowledge of eminent utility and advantage. Even in pieces which seem composed principally with a view to mechanical display and the powers of execution, the difficulties of the acquirement are greatly lightened by the knowledge of harmony. This is the reason why some accomplish, with moderate practice, what others fail in after the most laborious application. To know and to do are in all acquirements of practical skill very nearly related. This truth should be impressed upon the young with one other aphorism of musical experience, *Nothing is so difficult as it seems.*

The consideration of the delightful art of music, with its influence on home enjoyments, now beginning to be generally appreciated, has led the

writer to express herself upon it at greater length than she designed. It will be enough to say of other accomplishments, drawing, dancing, &c., that they should be pursued with the same serious purpose : transient successes and holiday triumphs in them must give place to permanent effects. The arts are most lovely in cultivated woman when they borrow and lend their graces, and blend into one harmonious whole. Poetry, which shows something to soften and to charm in the humblest object, and turns all animated nature into a garden of delights, is ever near her sisters.

Without that symmetrical eye for form and proportion, and for the arrangement of colours, of which drawing and painting are the school—though one would think it almost intuitive in the sex, how much of the poetry of our earth must be lost? Nay, how indispensable this eye to the correct arrangement of dress and costume. Without elegance of movement, which may be called the soul of dancing, what woman can please in the eye of society? Health, good temper, artless innocence of mind, may and will of themselves extract and confer pleasure ; but education still heightens the natural graces, not moulding all alike, but preserving the traits of individual character, which

charm in social intercourse. In a word, it has accomplished its highest object when it has trained alike the heart and the intellect, and placed knowledge on the basis of a sincere and virtuous character.

To realize such a plan of education requires chiefly the affectionate and vigilant maternal eye, under which the social relation of the pupils themselves shall be as that of sisters in a well ordered family, where cheerfulness and innocent freedom are encouraged, and where the "perfect love" which "casteth out fear" gives a tone of benevolence to the conversation. In such a state of life the studies proceed regularly under the mild influences of personal regard and attachment, with the hope of giving pleasure; and even the hours of recreation exercise and discipline the affections. But it should be begun betimes, and not deferred till the younger children are made use of to correct their elders, though with address, indeed, and to spare them the confusion which attends manifest ignorance of things which should be known. Nor will the evil which attends the delay of female education until the habits are formed, be remedied any more by the new fashioned Collegiate Institutions than by the so-called "Finishing

Schools." Education is a process in which advancement must be made by firm and solid steps. We can rarely make up by application of the mind towards book-learning at one season of life for a long period of neglect at another. The foundation of the building must be gradually and firmly laid, or the whole fabric will totter. And thus it is with mental culture, where all that is administered to produce good should have its proper season and its regular antecedents, and all unhealthy excitement should be avoided. There is nothing which gives more pain to the teacher than to see the haste to complete in education what has been ill begun, for mature lessons—or lectures bestowed out of place on unripe pupils, instead of answering their object, do only the more unsettle the mind and expose and confirm its defects. The subject is one which really demands the attentive and earnest consideration of parents, for "Time is Eternity begun."

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